NEW THEATRE MAGAZINE

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NEW THEATRE MAGAZINE

Volume III, Number 1 October 1961

The Quarterly Magazine of Repertory and University Drama

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Katherine Blake and Leonard Rossiter in "Goat Song" by Martin Shuttleworth.
[Desmond Tripp

Luther

by John Osborne

The full text of "the most eloquent piece of dramatic writing to have dignified our theatre since 'Look Back in Anger'"—KENNETH TYNAN reviewing the Paris production in THE OBSERVER. 10/6

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by Ronald Duncan

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Sam
the Highest Jumper of Them All

by William Saroyan

Mr. Saroyan's latest play, which was attacked by all the London critics without exception. His reply to the critics is included in the Introduction. 13/6

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"*Tempora Mutantur . . .*

THE EDITOR

. . . And we with them "—fortunately.

Act I: Place : Cardiff Time : January 1960

At that time we strongly criticised Cardiff and her attitude towards the professional theatre, when Michael Anderson, in a report on *The Capital without A Theatre*, said :

> "Before a professional management can be justified in appealing for patronage, it must first be able to offer something worthwhile in return; this Cardiff's theatres have so far failed to do".

The City Council, the existing Theatre Club and the University were urged to take action "of a bold and imaginative kind" to remedy the unhappy situation.

Act II: Place : The same Time : Three months later

Even after the considerable discussion and publicity in the Cardiff press given to our comments and proposals, we felt obliged to display our concern still further by remarking on this page that, despite the interest shown in the report, "there are still no indications that Cardiff City Council is prepared even to consider the possibility of building a full-scale municipal theatre, and . . . no signs that those who would like to see such a theatre in their city are prepared to combine and make themselves heard". We also warned against the dangers of compromise, since a plan for the erection of a small, 'cheap' theatre appeared to be under consideration. This studio theatre was apparently intended to bridge the gap until such time as the people of Cardiff should be ready to support a full-scale municipal theatre.

It is never pleasant to give or receive persistent criticism of this sort.

Act III: Place : The same Time : The present, eighteen months later.

At last we are able to reverse our attitude towards Cardiff and applaud what is being done for the theatre in that city. At last a plan has been put forward which has imagination and boldness even beyond our greatest hopes, a plan which must be acceptable to the Cardiff City Council, the Theatre Club, the University and the whole of the Principality—a plan for a National Theatre of Wales.

The article on the subject which appears in this issue describes the site, the scope and the policy of the proposed theatre. What is does not describe, however, are the reactions of the Council and of the people who will be expected to form the audiences. What financial support is the capital of Wales prepared to give to this project? What moral support are the people prepared to give? Since these are unknown factors at present, we can only hope that they share our enthusiasm and that they will seize the tremendous opportunity which is being offered them.

A word of warning, however. If this scheme is to be fully realised, then there must be no compromise; there must be no timid support from any quarter; there must be no half measures. Above all, it must be kept free of entanglement in local party-politics of the sort which continue to tarnish Nottingham's dealings with the theatre. Instead, the project must be carried through by all with the same spirit, determination and imagination shown by the few whom we must thank for its initiation.

A National Theatre for Wales

D. R. DAVIES

WHEREAS England has had to wait for the Chancellor of the Exchequer's financial nod, like a betting man at a racecourse meeting, Wales has to await the blessing of the Pope. People may be apt to think that Wales is the only country in the world where such a position as this could arise. It is not tied up with religion; it has to do with a site.

The land on which the proposed theatre is to be built, in the Cardiff Castle grounds, was intended by the Marquess of Bute, who owned it before presenting it to the City of Cardiff, to be used by the Roman Catholic Church; the original intention was to have built a cathedral there. Negotiations have been conducted with the Roman Catholics, who are thought to be well-disposed to the idea of a National Theatre on the spot, but the death of the Archbishop of Cardiff held things up. The appointment of a new Archbishop and the Papal assent must now precede any further progress.

So far as the actual site is concerned, Dame Flora Robson has said: "When it is built, the theatre must be up to the standard of the other fine buildings in Cardiff . . . This proposed Welsh National Theatre is a wonderful idea."

It was strange (or was it ?) that a week after the Government made a statement, in April this year, that it was not going to proceed with the building of a National Theatre in London, there came the news that plans were afoot and the blueprint drawn for a National Theatre for Wales.

The group behind the project, known as the St. David's Trust, had been considering for some time how to found such a theatre. The chairman, Lord Aberdare, announced that a National Theatre building was a fundamental need in the cultural life of Wales. It sprang from an Arts Council report, and Lord Aberdare became chairman of the Trust when it was formed in 1959. This year he launched a £300,000 fund-raising appeal to finance the building. The aims of the Trust are: To encourage dramatic talent in Wales; to promote Welsh (and English) plays; to form a repertory company of actors, writers, musicians and designers, and to give outstanding Welsh artists the chance to star in their own country.

The architect is a Welshman, Mr. Elidir Davies, who planned the Mermaid Theatre in London, where the Trust held its first meeting. Mr. Davies has said that the seating capacity will be about 1,000. The centre includes an art gallery, library, students' theatre, indoor and outdoor auditoria and a restaurant. The main building, to be known as the St. David's Theatre, has in addition certain other amenities. It will be suitable for anything from concerts to an opera, and there will be a large open-air theatre which will hold 3,000. Little wonder that the Lord Mayor of Cardiff called it "an exciting vision."

The theatre, which proposes to work in close co-operation with the Welsh National Opera Company, will be entirely self-contained, with departments for making its own scenery, costumes and wigs. The theatre will collaborate with television stations, and a 35mm. film projector and stereophonic equipment for recordings will be installed. It will also develop a School of Drama and support the establishment of

D. R. Davies is Drama Correspondent to the Western Mail, Cardiff.

a Chair of Drama in the University of Wales. The artistic administration of the theatre will be in the care of a director-general, supported by a management committee and an advisory council.

Mr. Clifford Evans, the Welsh actor and originator of the present scheme, has said : " The main aim is to establish a National Theatre worthy of the nation and comparable with any theatre in Europe. It is based on the idea to make Wales the centre of her own executive and artistic skills. It will be the most modern theatre in Europe and certainly unique in Britain. It will not be a provincial theatre. It will be a National Theatre and must stand comparison with the best in Europe. It will not be a repertory theatre, but it will have a resident company."

Support for the project has come from writers and actors all over the world. Swansea-born Harry Secombe immediately donated £100 to the Trust. Richard Burton cabled : " Sir Laurence Olivier joins me in wishing you every possible success with the Welsh National Theatre project, and we offer our services herewith for your opening season in 1964." A formidable list of artists of distinction have added their support to the artists of Wales.

A *Western Mail* editorial stated : " The true strength of a national culture can perhaps best be measured by the dynamic imagination of the few in planning its furtherance, and the widespread support of the many in bringing those plans to fruition. Wales in the past has had no need to fear measurement by these criteria, for through our own initiative and the financial support of a multitude of ordinary men and women we have created a University, a National Museum and a National Library. But in this cultural embattlement there has been one sadly obvious gap—the lack of a Welsh National Theatre . . . When—there must be no ifs—this project comes to fruition, we shall see an even greater burgeoning of Welsh talents, and this time in their native country rather than abroad. The scheme has been put forward; the rest is up to us."

Another newspaper has stated, with natural and logical caution : " It would be wise for everyone concerned (and it is to be hoped that all intelligent people in Wales are very much concerned) to have no illusion about the magnitude of the task that lies ahead before the dream of a Welsh National Theatre, made manifest in the model, can be transformed into reality."

It is an exciting prospect for the future of the arts in Wales.

Professor Sawyer Falk.

It is with great regret that news has been received of the sudden death of Sawyer Falk, Professor of Drama at Syracuse University, N.Y., and one of the most vigorous pioneers of academic theatre in America.

Golden Jubilee in Liverpool

B.M.B.

Maud Carpenter, General Manager, The Playhouse, Liverpool.

THIS year Liverpool's Repertory Theatre, The Playhouse, attains its Golden Jubilee, having been opened on November 11th, 1911. It has survived two World Wars, and has the distinction of being the oldest and probably the most successful unsubsidised repertory theatre in the country. It has reason to be proud of its reputation, not only as an excellent training ground for young actors and actresses, but also as a stepping stone in the career of many hitherto unknown authors, one of its functions being to produce plays some of which perhaps—not being commercial propositions—would otherwise have never been seen on the professional stage.

It was in the early part of this century that groups of drama enthusiasts began to ask why Liverpool should not have a Repertory Theatre of its own. There was nothing concrete in their deliberations however, until 1911, when a campaign for a permanent theatre really got going, with the late Sir Charles Reilly, then Professor of the Liverpool School of Architecture and eventually to become the chairman of the Liverpool Repertory Company, the leading spirit. Sir Charles was nothing if not enthusiastic, and soon he managed to get people from all walks of life interested in the scheme. Shipping magnates, leaders of commerce, the entire Press of the city, University professors, and people in humbler walks of life soon shared his enthusiasm, and when the theatre opened on November 11th, 1911, there were nine hundred shareholders who were blatantly told not to expect a dividend—and who have never received one!

Before the permanent theatre was bought, with great daring and optimism a trial season of the type of play to be presented was arranged at Kelly's Theatre—now alas no more—under the direction of Miss Darragh, a well known actress of the time (whose christian name never appeared on play bills or programmes) and Basil Dean, then a slim young man of twenty. The opening production was Galsworthy's *Strife,* and the distinguished author himself came for the final rehearsals. It was a huge success, as were the plays which followed in the memorable six weeks, and, inspired by the apparent interest in the movement shown by the audience, who flocked to see the plays, a band of public spirited citizens elected as the directorate immediately set about securing a permanent theatre. The late W. W. Kelly, one of the last real theatre showmen, top-hatted and always

This article was contributed by a member of the Liverpool Press, to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of the Liverpool Playhouse.

with a bright buttonhole in his well cut frock coat, wanted the directors to take over Kelly's Theatre, or the Shakespeare, which has been in the news so much lately and which he then owned.

His terms were too high, however, and the thoughts of the promoters turned to the old Star Music Hall in Williamson Square, where for generations good old 'blood and thunder' melodramas had been staged and where, in early Victorian days, there was a chairman on the stage to keep order when variety shows were produced, while the audience sat at tables in the auditorium, drinking. Moving spirits in the enterprise were the late Colonel Sir John Shute who, as chairman of directors for many years, often dipped into his own pocket when the theatre funds became perilously low, the late Sir Charles Reilly, Ronald Jeans, who eventually became a very successful playwright, and Basil Dean, the theatre's first producer.

According to Sir Charles Reilly, in his book *Scaffolding to the Sky,* the theatre was actually bought one day over lunch at the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool, when he and Clifford Muspratt, a member of a famous Liverpool family, and one of the first directors of the "Rep", entertained the owner of the Star, the late Harris Fineberg. The price was £28,000, of which £20,000 could remain on mortgage. "The excellence of the lunch did not reduce the price", wrote Sir Charles. "Indeed, it probably stiffened it, as I believe Harris Fineberg paid the hotel bill!".

Under the direction of Sir Charles Reilly and Professor Adshead of the University of Liverpool (who was an architect and generously accepted payment in shares), the theatre was re-designed, re-decorated and modernised. A paint and property room was added and the old beer cellar, from which thousands of pints had been served in days gone by to slake the thirst of the Star's audience, was converted into a charming foyer where coffee, tea and soft drinks are still served in the intervals. Thus, in a blaze of glory and general excitement, the theatre then known as The Liverpool Repertory Theatre opened its doors, with the civic recognition from the Lord Mayor of Liverpool, the late Lord Derby, grandfather of the present Lord Derby, who occupied one of the boxes. The name of the theatre was later changed to The Playhouse, by which title it is still known.

Aida Jenoure, a member of the Company, gorgeously attired as Mrs. Siddons, officially opened the theatre by reciting an Ode specially written by the present Poet Laureate, John Masefield, who has also composed an Ode to commemorate the Golden Jubilee, and which will be recited at the Gala Performance to take place on November 4th this year.

When the theatre opened, it was stated that the general sensation was one of joy and pride in the possession of a building "that is both comfortable and well adjusted for its special purpose. A new theatrical atmosphere is created by the especial personal interest which the Theatre inspires... a gift to Liverpool by the shareholders comparable to the other great institutions in the City".

For a time business flourished, but in that fickle way the public has, enthusiasm began to wane and audiences dwindled. Before recovery could be made, World War I came. Basil Dean resigned to join the Forces, as did several of the male members of the Company. Madge McIntosh was appointed as producer—an uncommon appointment in those days. Shortly after her arrival, the directors were considering closing the Theatre, when Estelle Winwood, one of the original members—still happily

with us, although for many years she has been starring on Broadway—came along with a cut and dried Commonwealth scheme which was readily accepted. The entire Company, stage staff, management, indeed everyone employed in the theatre, agreed to form themselves into a Commonwealth, with Madge McIntosh as producer at the head, and T. J. Pigott as business manager.

Salaries were to be half the normal, with artistes and staff shouldering the theatre's responsibilities. Entering into the spirit of the proposition, the directors on their part accepted bare overhead charges only. Wholehearted support was given by the public, and the Commonwealth proved a financial as well as an artistic success. In the Company at that time were Estelle Winwood, Eileen Thorndike (sister of Dame Sybil), Doris Lloyd (now long actively engaged in Hollywood), Percy Marmont, Wilfred Shine and William Armstrong, who was to become one of the theatre's most successful producers, and the discoverer of very many clever young artistes, among them Diana Wynyard, Robert Donat, Robert Flemyng, Hugh Williams and Michael Redgrave and his wife Rachel Kempson, who were married while at the Playhouse.

In the summer of 1916 Bridges Adams and Murial Pratt took over as stage director and producers, and were succeeded for a season by Nigel Playfair, with Doris Zinkeisen as scenic artist. William Armstrong was appointed in succession to Playfair in 1922 with A. S. Pigott as general manager. Upon Pigott's resignation in 1923, Maud Carpenter, who had been his assistant for some time, was invited to take over the business management, and since that time much of the financial success of the theatre and its social amenities have depended on her. Steeped in the tradition of the theatre, she has served it faithfully for fifty years, starting first as a junior Box Office clerk. Having been trained as a secretary, she became, after a term in the Box Office, secretary to Bridges Adams, and in turn assistant manager to A. S. Pigott, eventually becoming business manager and licensee, probably one of the first women in the country to hold such a position. She has made the Playhouse her life, and apart from her untiring work in the theatre itself, she has given up much of her limited leisure to addressing women's clubs —and men's too—on the Playhouse in order to inspire and keep up interest in both her own theatre and in the Repertory Movement generally. It will be a sorry day for Liverpool when she decides to retire from her onerous position, and a very difficult one for her successor.

When World War II brought heavy bombing to Merseyside and artistes were not easy to find, since so many young actors and actresses were serving in the Forces or engaged on work of national importance, and transport was difficult, the directors deemed it wise to close the theatre. But luckily having escaped damage —despite the surrounding devastation—the theatre was reopened in 1942, but not with the usual resident company. William Armstrong's ill-health prevented his resuming as producer, and the theatre was rented to the Old Vic Company, who had been bombed out of their London home in the Waterloo Road. Acting as a kind of liaison officer, Miss Carpenter remained as Manager and Licensee, and the Old Vic, despite wartime conditions, enjoyed considerable success, occupying the Playhouse until 1946, when it was not surprising that they tried to persuade Miss Carpenter to go to London with them. Fortunately for the Playhouse she decided to remain true to her

first theatrical love.

During the Old Vic regime many distinguished artistes and talented producers were brought to the Playhouse, among them Tyrone Guthrie, Peter Glenville, John Moody and Eric Capon.

The range of plays produced by the Old Vic differed in some respects from those to which the Playhouse audiences were accustomed, but the audiences differed too. Wartime audiences were mainly composed of young people in uniform, the majority of them strangers to Liverpool and in many cases seeing 'live' plays for the first time, having been born in an age of cinemas and radio. Many of the regular patrons who seldom missed a production had been bombed out of their homes and had, of necessity, left Liverpool; others were engaged on important war work which left them little time for theatre-going, especially with transport difficulties and early openings.

In the Autumn of 1946 the directors resumed control, appointed John Fernald as producer, engaged a resident company, and Paul Mayo became scenic artist—his first job in the theatrical world. John Fernald has said that his three years at the Liverpool Playhouse were professionally the happiest and most productive of his life.

"The Playhouse of the immediate post-war years", he has written, "presented an unique opportunity. It was possible then, in theory at least, to do work which could never be bettered and which showed off author, actors and producer at their full powers. The new post-war generation was eager for new ideas, and first class highly experienced performers could be found, men and women who had worked with me in London before the war, and whose careers the war had interrupted. We were all ready to start our professional careers over again and to come to Liverpool to do it".

"The Playhouse actors of that time varied greatly in experience and ability", writes Mr. Fernald, "but they were united in what is perhaps an unusual ambition among actors. They did not seek to become stars, but to play their part to the last ounce of effort in the creation of a balanced orchestrated effect. Some of those actors are now forgotten, for, when the Company broke up in 1949, they sought elsewhere for the ideals represented, and, failing to find them, left the stage. Many, however, who had enjoyed at the Playhouse a freedom from the 'jungle' of metropolitan theatre, returned to it again and thrived".

Mr. Fernald expresses the hope that some day the National Theatre of the North may be discovered to be a thriving reality in Williamson Square. High hopes, but who knows?

Outstanding in John Fernald's productions at the Playhouse was that of Tchekov's *The Cherry Orchard*. After its brilliant success at the Playhouse, it went to London as part of the Repertory Festival at St. James' Theatre in June 1948. There it received rave notices from London critics, some of whom are apt to forget that it is possible to have a high standard of acting outside the metropolis. It was, perhaps, the Company's finest hour, reflecting great credit on producer and artistes alike, and receiving at the last performance the 'blessing' of the late Queen Mary, then the most inveterate theatre-goer in the Royal Family. The production has become part of theatrical history and today is quite frequently quoted. In distinct contrast to the drama of Tchekov's play, John Fernald with great courage staged a specially written revue for the Christmas attraction in 1947. Entitled *A Party at the Playhouse*, with music composed by Ronald Settle, the theatre's

musical director, it was played by the resident company with Cyril Luckham acting as compere, and proved a tremendous success. When John Fernald left in 1948 to go to the Arts Theatre, London, (he is now Principal of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art), Gerald Cross, who had been an active member of the resident company for several seasons, became producer. Like his predecessors, he selected a young and enthusiastic Company of actors and actresses, some with considerable experience, others on the exciting threshold of their stage careers, and from time to time he engaged guest artistes. He, too, encouraged new authors and during his regime was responsible for the production of several brand new plays.

Among them were *Westward Journey* by Eve Morganti, *The Sun and I* by A. R. Whatmore, *The Tinder Box* by Nicholas Gray, and *Night's Lodging* by C. E. Openshaw. As with the other producers, the classics figured in Gerald Cross's productions, his outstanding effort, perhaps, being Shakespeare's *King Richard II* in which he, at the directors' request, played the title role, Michael MacOwan being engaged as guest producer. Ibsen's *Lady from the Sea* was another of his successes, and entirely different although no less successful was that classic of modern farces, Ben Travers' *Rookery Nook.*

Willard Stoker, the present producer, took over from Gerald Cross in 1951, coming with a distinguished history both as an actor and producer. He has been responsible for many and varied productions which have added to the theatre's long history of successes. Among the plays he has directed were many receiving their first performance on any stage—Bridget Boland's moving play *Journey to Earth* which eventually went up in London under the title of *The Return,* and more recently Playhouse audiences were privileged to see the premiere of Russell Braddon's fine war-time play *You'll Never Get Off the Island,* which, retitled *The Naked Island,* was later produced at the Arts Theatre, London. Interested in the American stage and realising from experience that the Playhouse audiences find them appealing, he has been responsible for the inclusion of several plays by American authors in the programmes.

Presented for the first time in this country were John Van Druten's *Druid's Circle,* Rosemary Casey's *Late Love,* Arthur Laurent's *Time and the Cuckoo,* Richard Nash's *Girls of Summer,* and Elmer Rice's *Dream Girl,* all of which were enthusiastically received.

As a Christmas attraction he put on a delightful production of *The Two Bouquets,* and displayed a flair for directing this type of entertainment. Subsequently he and Ronald Settle wrote and produced four very successful plays to music as end-of-the-season attractions. They were *Spring Quartet, Theme and Variations, The Londonderry Heir* and *I Remember, I Remember.*

This year the theatre has commemorated, at the invitation of the Arts Council, the centenary of Sir James Barrie with a production of *Quality Street,* the centenary of Tchekov's birth with *The Seagull,* and in connection with the Liverpool Bluecoat Society of Arts celebration of "Arts at the Turn of the Century" a performance of Shaw's *Candida.*

The plays produced during the 1960/61 season, which ended in June, were *A Shred of Evidence* by R. C. Sherriff, *All My Sons* by Arthur Miller, *Thark* by Ben Travers, *The Wind and the Rain* by Merton Hodge, *Candida* by G. B. Shaw, *Juno and the Paycock* by Sean O'Casey, *I Killed The Count* by Alec Coppell. *Brer Rabbit* proved

Scene from "The Matchmaker." Produced June, 1961, at The Playhouse, Liverpool.

Members of Bristol Old Vic Company in "Goat Song," by Martin Shuttleworth. [Desmond Tripp.

REPORT

on the conference

called to discuss the desirability of establishing

A FELLOWSHIP IN PLAYWRITING

in the

UNIVERSITY of BRISTOL

March 12 — 15, 1961

A *NEW THEATRE MAGAZINE* Special Supplement

In February, last Mr. John Whiting, Dr. Alex Comfort, Mr. John Arden, Miss Ann Jellicoe and Mr. Richard Findlater kindly gave three days of their time to come to Bristol and join forces with representatives of the Bristol Old Vic Company and School, the West Region of the B.B.C., Independent Television for Wales and the West of England, and members of staff of Bristol University to discuss the pros and cons of establishing a Fellowship in Playwriting within the University. No such Fellowship existed in any British university, and it was doubtful whether an appointment of this kind existed in any university. There was thus good reason to discuss such a project with care, and to ensure that any recommendations which might be made to the University of Bristol proposing the creation of such a post should command the approval of practising playwrights and producers.

The immediate cause of this action was the endowment of a Fellowship in Drama within the University of Bristol by the Board of Directors of Independent Television for Wales and the West of England as a memorial to their first Chairman, the late Viscount Cilcennin of Hereford. In other words, money existed with which to establish either a scholarship at student level, or a staff post, devoted to some aspect of the study of drama at an advanced level. The idea of devoting this award specifically to playwrights and playwriting, rather than to any other aspect of drama, derived from the previous experiments conducted along these lines in the University during the years 1955-1960, and financed from funds made available to the University by the Rockefeller Foundation in 1954.

At the start of the Conference, Professor Wickham outlined the Drama Department's aims and actions in its handling of the Rockefeller Award since 1954. Scholarships worth £500 each had been awarded to four young playwrights, and the residue had been held in reserve to meet any special costs which might arise as a result of producing the plays written during the period of the award. Much valuable experience had been obtained as a result of these early experiments.

Three principles had governed the

selection of candidates: possession of a university degree, evidence of an ability to write, and evidence of desire to write in dramatic form. Applicants had been asked to submit scripts (plays or other writing), a *curriculum vitae*, and the names of three referees. Three separate short-lists were drawn up, the first by one reader who had read all the scripts submitted without reference to the *curriculum vitae*, the second by a panel of readers who graded the scripts read by them as A, B or C quality and took some cognizance of the *curriculum vitae*. Authors of A scripts were automatically short-listed; authors of C scripts were as automatically eliminated, and all B scripts were read by a second member of the panel and allocated to the A or C pile. The third short-list was arrived at by a second panel of assessors from scrutiny of the *curriculum vitae* and without reference to the scripts submitted. It was a curious fact that several of the names figuring on one of these short-lists had also figured on both of the other two short-lists, and that this pattern had repeated itself on each occasion that the award was advertized. Thus it was comparatively easy to arrive at a final short-list of candidates for interview. The Director of the Bristol Old Vic Company and the Principal of the School had always been among the members of the Committee that interviewed the candidates. Their views carried considerable weight, since all that was being asked of the successful candidate was that he or she should write a play in the course of the year of a kind suitable for production by the University, by the Old Vic School or by the Company at the Theatre Royal.

As a result of these methods of selection, a Fellowship in Playwriting had been awarded to Mr. Derek Coltman, Miss Gillian Richards, Mr. John Arden and Mr. Martin Shuttleworth. Mr. Coltman's and Miss Richards' awards took the form of postgraduate scholarships. Mr. Arden's and Mr. Shuttleworth's appointments were both to the academic staff of the Drama Department. Mr. Coltman's play *The Merger* (1956) and Miss Richards' play *Sense of Direction* (1958) were performed in the University's Studio Theatre by final-year acting students of the Old Vic School. Mr. Arden's *The Happy Haven* (1960) was performed by the Bristol Old Vic Company in the Studio and subsequently tranferred to the Royal Court Theatre in London. Mr. Shuttleworth's *Goat Song* had been accepted for production by the Company at the Theatre Royal.

Professor Wickham concluded his summary of the Department's experience by saying that although many difficulties had emerged in the actual conduct of the experiment which required further discussion, sufficient success had attended it to warrant calling the present conference to decide whether the Cilcennin Memorial Fellowship in Drama should be devoted specifically to establishing a Fellowship in Playwriting in perpetuity.

In a short report of this kind it is not possible to print verbatim the many useful criticisms, comments and suggestions made by individual members of the conference in response to this survey of the Department's past experience. Suffice it to say that the principal subsequent sessions of the conference were devoted to looking at the Fellowship from particular angles, each of them chosen to reflect the special interest of one or the other of the collaborating institutions directly involved —the Bristol Old Vic Company, the School, the B.B.C., T.W.W. and the University—and that the points of substance relevant to the final recommendations made during these discussions are summarized below.

1. The School and the Fellowship.

The Principal of the Old Vic School said that he welcomed the opportunity that was now offered to transfer the Fellowship from

a basis of experiment to one of a more permanent kind. He thought it important that young actors undergoing training should learn to adjust themselves as soon as possible to the particular problems of a new and untried script. No theatre could survive for ever on a repertoire of established box-office favourites. If new plays were to get a showing in these days of rising production costs, it was in the repertory theatres to which students from the acting schools would go on completing their training that the new plays must be tried out. New scripts presented actors with special problems. Plays by Shakespeare, Molière or Chekov gave actors considerable self-confidence in front of audiences because the texts were recognized on both sides of the footlights as being good plays with good parts before the performance began; but new plays offered no such boosts to the actor's moral. Everything about a new play was in doubt, not only throughout rehearsal but for several days after the first performance. It was essential therefore that actors should learn to face up to the responsibility which was theirs in creating new characters in new scripts, and discover how they could help the dramatist to modify his dialogue at short notice during rehearsal in order to give the play a better chance of success at its first performance. To this extent the continuance of the Fellowship was of positive advantage to the School in that student actors could be assured of the chance of acquiring this important experience while still at the school.

On the debit side, however, the Principal of the School stressed the dangers that could result if student actors were exposed to criticism in the national press as a result of giving first-performances to first plays by inexperienced writers. In working with Mr. Coltman and Miss Richards on their plays he had found that the time allowed for the writing, revision, duplicating and rehearsal of their plays was far too short. Where time enough ought to have existed for the playwright to rethink a character, there was only time in fact to do a patchwork job with paste and scissors. Student actors recognised these tactics as being half-measures and did not possess the necessary experience to bluff out their lack of confidence in the characters they were portraying. This was something which betrayed itself at once to audiences, including press critics. Unfortunately critics often mistook faults in the writing for faults in the acting, which was a serious matter for a student about to embark upon a career as an actor; for where the professional actor had to accept bad notices as a normal part of the task of earning his daily bread, the student ought not to be asked to risk damning himself in the eyes of an influential critic before he was even ready to seek employment. It was recognized that professional press criticism was important to the author, and that the University might regard exposure of the Fellow's play to such criticism as the equivalent of an examination in the subject for which the scholarship had been awarded. If this were so, then the School's willingness to collaborate must in future be qualifield by three provisos.

Either 1 The Fellow must not be a total novice.

Or 2 If a novice, more time must be allowed for the writing and revision of the script.

Or 3 The script written for perforance before critics of the national press ought to be acted by university amateurs or professionals in the Old Vic Company, but not by students of acting. The School would work with the author on some other script, either preparatory to or resulting from the main play.

Mr. John Arden, as both a member of the conference and a former holder of the Fellowship, reinforced all that the Principal of the School had had to say about the time factor. He had been given three months in which to write *The Happy Haven*, two months to translate his first draft into the script which the actors of the Old Vic Company encountered at the first reading, and three weeks for rehearsal and revision. He realized that many authors could not write without a deadline, but felt that a Fellowship of one year's duration presented the parties concerned with too many problems for it to be worth perpetuating. While not wishing to imply any lack of gratitude to the University for the opportunity which his year of tenure of the Fellowship had given him to think about playwriting and to write plays without the anxiety of serious financial worry, he felt that he could have derived more help from it himself and given the University a better return for its money if the Fellowship had been tenable for two or three years instead of one.

Mr. Shuttleworth, the present holder of the Fellowship, shared Mr. Arden's viewpoint, saying that it took time as a newcomer in a large university community to get to know how things worked, and to form any worthwhile relationships with staff and students. His own experience was demonstrating to him that just as he was beginning to feel fully conversant with the possibilities of the Fellowship, the time was approaching for him to surrender it.

The idea of a three-year appointment was strongly canvassed in discussion, but Mr. Whiting pertinently observed that the number of writers of ability who would be willing to reside in Bristol and abandon London or continental cities for three consecutive years was likely to limit applications. He would himself have been thankful as a younger man for the sort of opportunity the Fellowship offered, but not at that price. He thought two years residence was the proper time-span, with the possibility of a third year of tenure so long as residence in Bristol was not obligatory.

2 The Bristol Old Vic Theatre Company.

The Company Manager spoke of the stimulus which a resident dramatist supplied to the Company; his presence offered its members the chance to discuss and participate in the sort of experimental work that normally lay outside the reach of any theatre which had to pay its way commercially. This was important to the artistic health of any theatre. The Bristol Old Vic had enjoyed working on *The Happy Haven* and welcomed the possibility of maintaining the partnership established with the University which the Cilcennin Memorial Fellowship suggested. Difficulties, he said, were always likely to arise in matching the sort of play the dramatist wanted to write with the sort of play which the production resources of the Company could meet. Mr. Arden had stated from the start that he wanted to experiment with masks and an Elizabethan style of stage : it was asking a bit much to expect the Company to put as off-beat a play as was likely to result from this statement of intention into its normal repertoire. Accordingly a compromise had been found whereby the Company split into two halves for a short period in order to present *The Happy Haven* in the Drama Studio while performing a play more likely to appeal to a wider audience at the Theatre Royal. Mr. Shuttleworth's *Goat Song* involved a cast of some thirty to forty characters, a fact which automatically ruled out Studio production; the play was accordingly listed for production at the Theatre Royal as the last production of the season, but for two weeks only instead of the normal three.

Miss Jellicoe made a strong plea to save the Fellowship from being so hedged about with academic and commercial caution as

to prevent the dramatist from saying what he wanted to say in the way he wanted to say it. It was hard enough already for any author whose ideas were considered 'far out' to cut through the timidity of managers, and the pedestrian orthodoxy of the agents and advisors who protected them, and submit the play directly to the judgment of an audience. This Fellowship offered an almost unique chance of short-circuiting prejudice; but this chance would be obliterated in advance if nobody who did not hold a university degree could apply for it, and if the successful candidate found that his play was denied production because it was said to be too off-beat for the local audience. The Company Manager, while admitting the force of this plea, said that since the appointment was tenable in the University, the University must say whether or not it was essential for applicants to hold degrees. As far as the theatre was concerned, the Company preferred someone who had worked in a theatre before, and who was clear enough in his own mind about the play he intended to write to discuss its technical implications in terms of the practical realities of stage production, including the budget. The word 'experiment' was frequently used to conceal dilettantism. It was one thing to take a calculated risk of losing money (as his Company were in fact doing in undertaking to produce Mr. Shuttleworth's *Goat Song*), but quite another to encourage lazy-mindedness by subsidizing it. The Company was prepared to spend more money on *Goat Song* than on any other play in the season and to risk a loss, partly because they felt this form of collaboration with the University was itself worth while and partly because it was the sort of play which a company like the Bristol Old Vic ought to tackle. There was always the chance that a selection committee might make a mistake and if it should transpire that the University were to be abused and that the Theatre Royal were to be exploited as a result of a bad appointment, that must not be allowed to matter. The University, however, would be wise to minimize this risk by ensuring that those institutions who might be called upon to put the Fellow's play into production continued to be represented in an advisory capacity on the selection committee.

Mr. Findlater spoke in favour of abolishing graduate status as a condition of application. In his opinion no university ought to dabble in so essentially creative an enterprise as the writing and producing of plays unless it wished to enlarge its own horizons by having in its midst the best person at the job immediately available. The ability to write good plays had little to do with success in examinations, at school or anywhere else. He was delighted that a university should be so true to its liberal ideals in these days of specialization to consider establishing a Fellowship in Playwriting; but to rule out the chance of appointing a potential Shakespeare because he had not progressed academically beyond a grammar school was to invite the ridicule of everyone in the theatre. Mr. Arden observed that he had taken his degree in architecture and thought it quaint that this circumstance should have determined his eligibility for the Fellowship in 1959.

Professor Wickham, in replying to these criticisms, said that the University had no wish to be restrictive either in the initial process of appointment or in the facilities subsequently offered. On the other hand, members of the conference must ask themselves whether this Fellowship was to be a replica of the bursaries already offered by the Arts Council to dramatists of proven talent, or whether it was to be something recognizably different. If it was to be different in kind, then it must take its character from the life of the university in

the first instance and the theatre in the second; otherwise the Fellow ought to be seconded to the Theatre Royal or to a Television Company and left to fend for himself. He felt that university graduates ought to receive some priority of consideration, partly because their past experience equipped them to settle quickly into the university environment, and partly because they could legitimately regard such a Fellowship as a normal extension of their undergraduate careers; but that this priority should not be stretched to the point where any graduate applicant took automatic precedence over non-graduates who were judged by the selection committee to be more talented. Concerning the production of the Fellow's scripts, Professor Wickham said that if tenure were extended to two or three years there was no reason to deny the Fellow a guarantee of production. If, for various good reasons, the Theatre, the School and the two local Broadcasting Companies, all felt obliged to reject the script submitted, then the University must itself fulfil this obligation to the author. In this way, the author was at least assured that no form of censorship (however oblique) was operating against his script and that his play could be discussed by people who had seen it brought to life in production. Nor was there any reason, granted a longer appointment than a single year, why the Fellow should not attempt several types of play if he were so minded. It was, however, important that he should have time enough to make the fruits of his experience as a creative artist available to members of the University who wished to consult him.

3 Radio and Television Drama.

Mr. Donald Wilson and Mr. Desmond Hawkins attended the conference as guests on behalf of the B.B.C., and Mr. Michael Frostick on behalf of T.W.W. Mr. Frostick was anxious for it to be clear at the outset that one of the conditions on which the Board of his Company had made its financial offer to the University of Bristol as a memorial to Lord Cilcennin was that the Company should have no say in how the University used the endowment. He had accepted the invitation to attend this conference in order to be able to repeat this and to say that the Company would be glad to help holders of the Fellowship *if requested*, but that the initiative in this respect must come from the Fellow himself or from the Drama Department on his behalf.

Likely forms which such requests for help might take were in fact suggested by Mr. Wilson and Mr. Hawkins of the B.B.C. Mr. Wilson remarked that if the Fellow were genuinely creative he would feel compelled to write more than one play. With the facilities available to him in Bristol he might well wish to explore those of radio and television. The B.B.C. was anxious to help a playwright in this position in a practical sense. Machinery existed for consultation and advice; on the financial side some proportion of royalties for commissioned work was normally payable in advance. The possibility existed here for supplementing the funds available to the Fellow from his university award should the period of tenure be in doubt on financial grounds. Mr. Hawkins supported these sentiments, but asked members of the conference to remember that since both radio and television were mass media it was always going to be difficult to carry plays which did not communicate with many people. As far as sound broadcasting was concerned, the West Region studios were fully equipped to meet all contingencies, and by the Spring of 1962 more studio accommodation for television would be ready for use. If the Fellow wanted to sit in on rehearsals from first reading to transmission, the West Region would be glad to welcome him and to brief him in what was happening. Ideally, the Region

would like to commission a television script from the Fellow. If he was resident in Bristol for long enough to become closely acquainted with people and manners in the West Country, he should remember that subject matter characteristic of the region was easier to accept for production (for reasons of general policy) than material which lacked any local or topical appeal. The B.B.C. would not wish to interfere with the production of any of the Fellow's plays written for the stage, but it would like to be allowed to show an interest in a radio production.

Dr. Comfort regretted the apparent unwillingness of television programme planners to risk anything remotely 'far-out', and expressed the hope that what had been said about practical help for the Fellow would not be made subject to 'ratings' or other quantitative means of assessment which ignored quality. Mr. Whiting, on the other hand, thought the Fellow ought to approach television with great caution since there were very grave dangers attached to experimenting in public.

4 The Fellowship and the University

By the time that the conference entered its final session, most of the major issues likely to figure in recommendations to the University had already emerged. Members were unanimous in thinking that the progress and achievement represented by the experimental Fellowships financed from the Rockefeller Award from 1955-1961 warranted a recommendation that the Cilcennin Memorial Fellowship in Drama should be devoted exclusively to playwriting and awarded to playwrights. The principal questions still requiring clear-cut answers were :

1 Whether or not graduate status should continue to be an essential prerequisite for application.
2 Whether the Fellowship should be awarded annually or as occasion warranted.
3 Whether tenure should be for one year, as in the past, or for a longer period.
4 Whether or not any production guarantee should figure in the terms of appointment.

In introducing discussion of these problems, Professor Wickham said that the answers to all of them were intimately bound up with the financial conditions of the Award. The University anticipated an annual income of £700 from the capital endowment of the Fellowship. Past experience had taught the Drama Department that if a Fellowship of this kind was to fulfil its purpose, money must be available to meet two separate, but inter-related, needs. The first was to provide the Fellow with enough money to live on during the period of his appointment; the second was to ensure the existence of a reserve fund which could be drawn upon to help finance the production of his play should it transpire that the normal funds allocated to this purpose were inadequate. The existence of a reserve fund of this sort had in fact determined whether or not Mr. Arden's *The Happy Haven* could be produced by the Bristol Old Vic Company.

In the light of the discussion of financial issues which followed, it was agreed that it would be wiser to determine the allocation of the income in the context of a three year period than on a strict year-by-year basis, *i.e.* in terms of £2,100 available every three years, rather than in terms of £700 a year. This decision cleared the way for two important propositions. The first was that the Fellowship should be tenable for more than one year; the second was that the University should not be obliged to fill the post every year. If, for example, an award were made in two years out of every three, it would become possible for one person to hold the appointment residentially for two consecutive years, with nominal

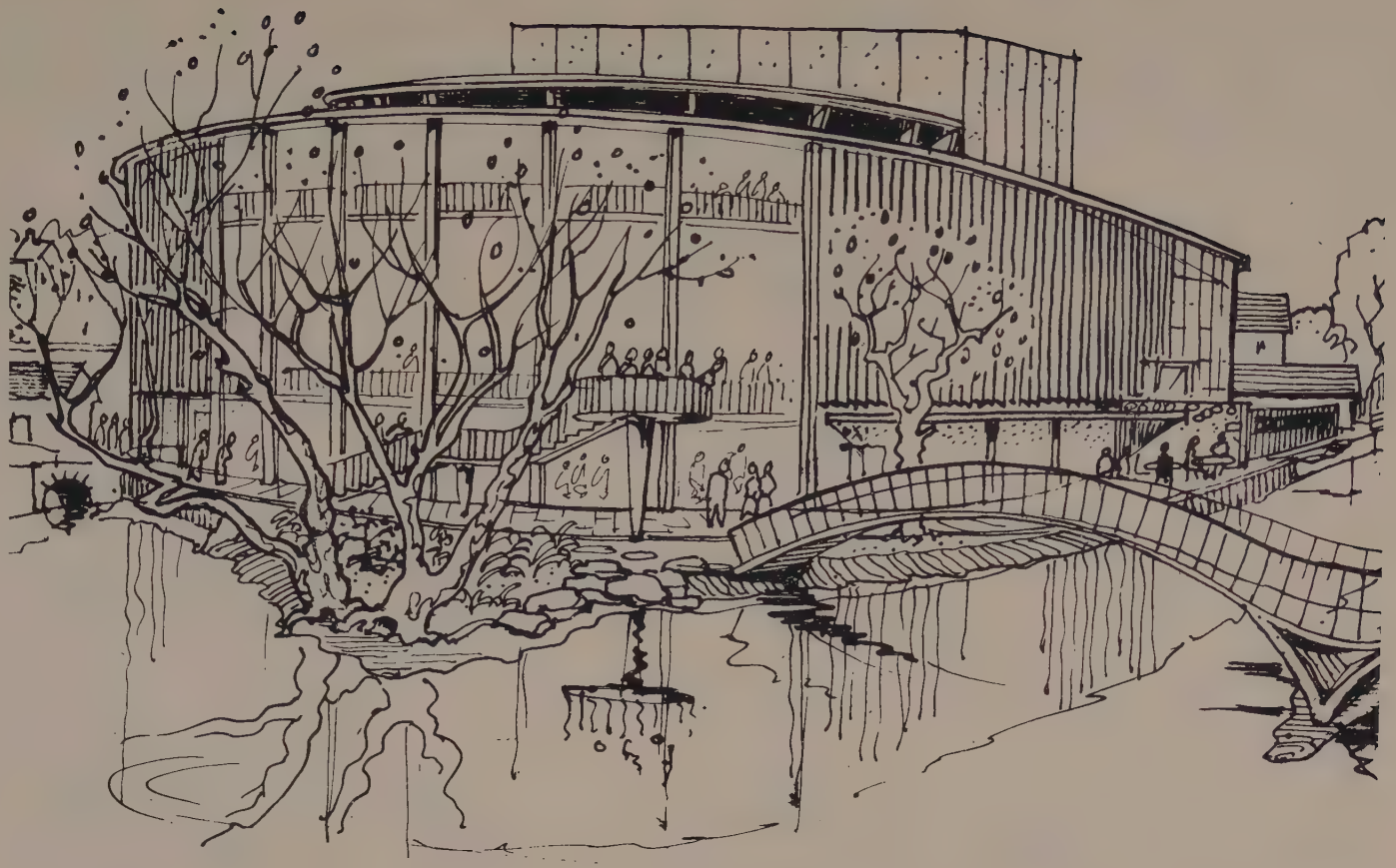
tenure for a third year in which residence was not obligatory. Such an arrangement would also allow the scale of the Fellow's emolument to be varied according to the duties expected of him year by year, and enable the University to build up a reserve fund from that proportion of the income which was not used in the third of each three-year period. After discussing these propositions in detail, the members of the conference drew up a list of recommendations for Professor Wickham to present to his colleagues in the Drama Department. These were :

1 That the Fellowship be offered for dramatic composition.
2 That the Fellowship be offered for not less than one and not more than three years, the residential qualification being variable at the discretion of the University.
3 That the Fellowship be open to anyone of British or Commonwealth nationality whose evidence of qualification must include at least one completed play in English. Candidates who submit more than one script must date each script submitted.
4 That the appointment be made to the academic staff of the University and that the salary be equivalent to that paid to an Assistant Lecturer.
5 That the Fellow be expected to renounce his interests in commercial rights during the period he is in receipt of a salary from the University.
6 That accommodation in Bristol be found for the Fellow, but not paid for.
7 That the Fellow be required to complete one full-length play for submission to the Head of the Drama Department not later than the end of the first year of tenure.
8 That the Fellow be informed that the Bristol Old Vic Theatre Company, the School, the West Region of the B.B.C. and T.W.W. as well as the University will be interested in considering any play he writes for production during the period of his appointment.
9 That the Fellow be expected to make himself available to staff and students in the University for advice and consultation, but not as a teacher, during the period that he is resident in Bristol.
10 That the Fellowship be advertized in the press at the start of the University session prior to that in which the Fellow is to take up his appointment.

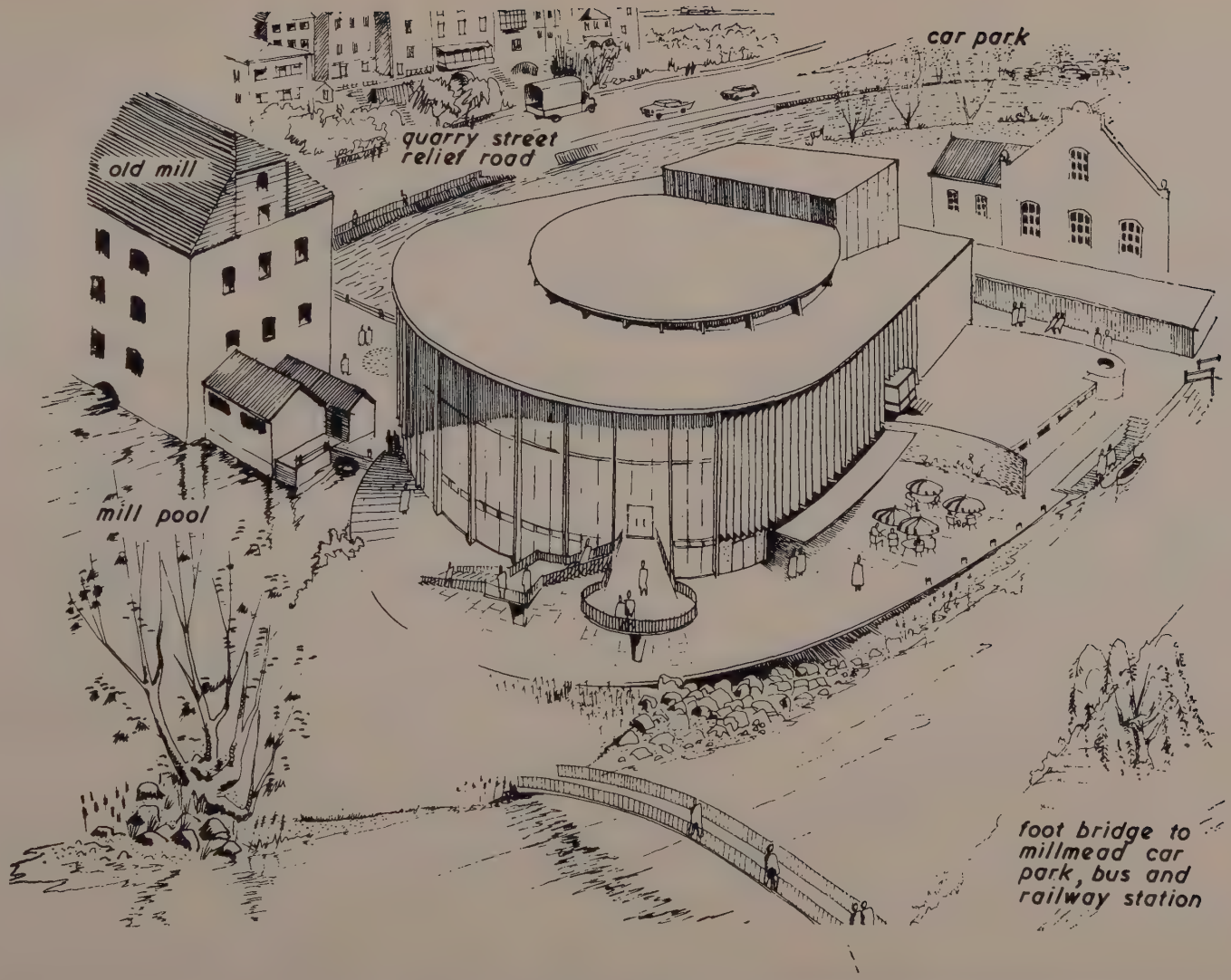
These recommendations, which have now been considered by the Drama Department and by the Board of the Faculty of Arts, will form the basis of the Ordnance and Regulations governing the Fellowship for submission to the Senate and Council of the University. It is hoped that approval will have been received by the time that this report is published. If this proves to be correct, then anyone who is interested in applying for the Fellowship for the Session 1962-63 and thereafter will be able to obtain full particulars by writing to The Registrar, Bristol University, Bristol 8.

FOOTNOTE—It was originally intended to publish this report as an independent pamphlet. For several reasons, however, it was found more practical to include it in this issue of *New Theatre Magazine*. Additional copies of this number, containing the Supplement, are available from the Sales Manager, *New Theatre Magazine*, 99 Woodland Road, Bristol 8, price 2/6 including postage and packing. (Post free and discount on orders of one dozen or more).

Ed.



The Yvonne Arnaud Theatre, Guildford.



The Yvonne Arnaud Theatre, Guildford.

greatly to the liking of the youngsters who crowded the theatre at the Christmas matinees.

The beginning of the Spring season saw the première of Philip Johnson's *A Change of Air,* the succeeding plays being *The Same Sky* by Yvonne Mitchell, *One Way Pendulum* by N. F. Simpson *Roots* by Arnold Wesker, *The Seagull* by Tchekov, *Someone Waiting* by Emlyn Williams, *Rollo* by Marcel Achard adapted by Felicity Douglas, and Thornton Wilder's amusing comedy *The Matchmaker.*

Opening the Autumn season of the Golden Jubilee, *The Tiger and the Horse* by Robert Bolt was given, and other plays to follow are *Amateur Means Lover* by Dodie Smith, *The Enchanted* by Jean Giraudoux adapted by Maurice Valency, *School for Scandal* by Sheridan, which will be given at the Gala Performance on November 4th, and *The Affair* by C. P. Snow.

Almost every production put on at the Playhouse is 'home-made'. Costumes, stage sets and properties are all made in the Theatre workshops. In this connection the theatre has been singularly fortunate in the scenic artists responsible for decor and costumes.

An innovation which has proved most successful was the inauguration of the Playhouse Award to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art whereby the student considered to be the most promising is given a year's contract with the Resident Company. Up to date the young artistes who have benefitted by this Scholarship include Margaret Whiting, Terence Knapp, Brian Bedford, Richard Briers, Caroline Blakiston, John Stride, Benjamin Whitrow and John Thaw. The majority of them are now either appearing in the West End or in films, on television and sound radio.

In 1954 a National Competition for the Best Design for the Programme cover was arranged. Eminent judges examined over 300 entries from all over the country, and three prizes were awarded. The Chairman of Directors, Lord Cohen of Birkenhead, gave a special prize for a design from a Merseyside artist. Many of the designs have been used on the programme covers.

It may be asked why Liverpool Repertory has continued successfully with its high standard for half a century, why it has been able to make ends meet without a subsidy of any sort, and why it has been a centre of theatrical culture on Merseyside and a focus of national interest. Lord Cohen of Birkenhead, who devotes a great deal of his valuable time to the Playhouse, thinks the answer lies, firstly, in that the theatre itself is a thing of beauty, with, it is generally conceded, the best acoustics in the country; it is easily accessible, being situated in the centre of the City, has an inviting foyer where friendliness abounds, and the whole presided over by the genial and omnipresent Maud Carpenter. "The theatre's debt to her can never be fully repaid", says Lord Cohen, a sentiment echoed by his fellow directors.

The second point is the programme of plays. Throughout the years the Company has traversed the whole gamut of the dramatic repertoire, classical, modern and not only British from Shakespeare through Sheridan and Shaw to Sherriff, but also the best of European and American drama. Each season's balance sheet tells the same story—the play's the thing. One lesson we have learned over the years is that to ensure solvency we must inevitably disappoint those critics who decry any play which is a Box Office success. We know that many of the plays will have a limited appeal, and we are prepared to take, and several times during the season do take, financial risks, but our policy remains that of presenting a balanced programme which will meet the

needs of the majority of the informed theatrical public, whilst being mindful of special tastes and interests.

Thirdly, there is the fact that our Companies have been equal to the demands made upon them. We have cradled and nurtured many who have become stars, but our function is not simply to groom for stardom but to train competent and versatile performers who will work as a team, for in true Repertory there is no place for the 'star'.

In the fourth place, we have been fortunate in the excellence of our producers and stage designers, who have delighted both ear and eye; we have also enjoyed an enviable loyalty and devotion on the part of our staff, both stage and front of house. The future is hidden from us but this is certain: this theatre has survived the mortal blows before which so many Repertory theatres have fallen because of its faith and because of the efforts and the support of its custodians and patrons.

B.M.B.

The Yvonne Arnaud Theatre, Guildford

ERIC LONGWORTH, JOHN BROWNRIGG

THE present theatre in Guildford was founded in 1946 by the late Patrick Henderson and his brother Roger Winton, after a chance remark by Dame Sybil Thorndike had led them to visit the town. Eventually, through the good offices of the Guildford and District Co-operative Society, they took over, on a five year lease, the Borough Hall, formerly the town's Assize Court, and latterly used for dances, the occasional concert and amateur dramatic productions.

A voluntary Board of Directors was appointed under the Chairmanship of the then Mayor, Councillor, now Alderman, A. W. Graham-Brown and included the Earl and Countess of Onslow, Dame Sybil Thorndike, General Sir Robert Haining, Yvonne Arnaud and her husband, Hugh McLellan, Lawrence Powell and Leslie Codd. The last three and the Chairman have continued as Directors ever since.

How the Borough Hall was transformed into a theatre seating 402 is another story; suffice it to say that, as the Surrey County Council would not give a theatre license unless drastic alterations were made, the only alternative was to operate as a Theatre Club. And so it has continued for fifteen years, presenting a change of programme every week, in the early days interchanging with Amersham every other week, but nowadays only occasionally exchanging visits, because of the heavy extra cost involved.

Over the years the Guildford Theatre has built up a reputation for encouraging not only young actors and actresses who have since made their names, but also new authors, and in recent years has varied the programme by the inclusion of an

Eric Longworth is General Manager of the present Guildford Theatre, and John Brownrigg is the Architect responsible for the design of the new proposed theatre.

occasional week of Ballet and Spanish Dancing and only recently successfully staged an original revue, which attracted a most favourable notice in *The Times*.

To say that the existing theatre building is not ideal would be a masterpiece of understatement and it was with great joy that the Board of Directors received the news that the Guildford Corporation, which had subsidised the theatre for many years, had allocated a site on the banks of the River Wey for a new theatre at a peppercorn rent. The onus, however, was on the Theatre Board to raise sufficient money to build the theatre, but before they could do this they wanted to know approximately how much it was going to cost. At that time there were very few theatres being built and very few architects who knew the problems involved, but here the Board was fortunate in that a resident in the town was an architect who had already prepared drawings for a theatre in Guildford, John Brownrigg of Messrs. Scott. Brownrigg and Turner.

After examining his plans, which incidentally were not drawn to fit the site in question, the Board retained Mr. Brownrigg and instructed him to prepare plans for a theatre seating approximately 550 in Stalls and Circle with ancillary services, restaurant, bar and club room. Just how he has done this Mr. Brownrigg will tell you in his own words.

The Theatre Board, having started the ball rolling, then decided that they would set up a separate Trust responsible for raising the money and building the theatre, which would then be sub-let to the existing theatre company. Furthermore they decided that the new theatre should be known as the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre in memory of that great actress and concert pianist, who was not only a founder Director, but also a resident of Guildford until her death.

The Yvonne Arnaud Theatre Trust was finally established in May, 1961 under the Chairmanship of Alderman A. W. Graham-Brown with two representatives of the Borough Council, the present Mayor, Alderman E. A. Jones and the Deputy Mayor, Alderman C. E. Nicklin, two representatives of the Theatre Board, one representative from the Guildford Playgoers' Society and one from the British Actors' Equity Association, together with three members who served as private individuals, two of whom, Mr. Hugh McLellan and Mr. Lawrence Powell, are also members of the Board of the present theatre. Their first duty was to sign a 99 year lease with the Corporation and to delegate responsibility for the raising of the money, a target figure of £200,000 having been fixed, to an Executive Committee and an Appeal Organiser. In this latter capacity, Miss Nellie Grange commenced her duties on the 1st September on a full-time basis, having spent many weeks before this planning her campaign. The Executive Committee meets monthly and a Council has been set up with representatives from all the villages surrounding Guildford.

Many prominent people in all walks of life have consented to become Patrons, including the Vice-Lieutenant of Surrey, Lord Hamilton of Dalzell, and the Bishop of Guildford. These are backed by the 7,000 members of the existing Guildford Theatre Club, Ltd., who are spread over a wide area surrounding this beautiful and ancient country town in which, at the present time, work is proceeding on the building of a new Civic Hall to provide a fitting home for the Guildford Municipal Orchestra, a new Public Library, and the nearly completed tower of Guildford Cathedral which was consecrated in the presence of Her Majesty the Queen as recently as May, 1961.

The Yvonne Arnaud Theatre will com-

plete the picture and make Guildford a centre of gracious living with a building worthy of the Company's past achievements.

ERIC LONGWORTH

To write about the architectural aspects of a new Theatre it is necessary to do more than describe a building. A Theatre, more than any other building except perhaps a Church, is a physical enclosure for an almost entirely non physical experience. For this reason the creation of atmosphere is even more important than the solution of a series of functional problems. It is perhaps for this reason that the Greek and Roman theatres, or almost any natural open air amphitheatre, have proved so successful.

However, the task of the architect today is made a very difficult one by the practical limitations imposed by statute, such as the need for emptying the auditorium effectively in case of fire and, most crippling restriction of all, the insistence on a rigid fire curtain between stage and auditorium. The only thing for the architect to do is to try and design as though regulations did not exist, at the same time keeping them in his subconscious mind, in the hope that somehow the problems will solve themselves without ruining the most precious feature of his design.

It is necessary to state these facts so that it may be appreciated that the design of a theatre today is a synthesis of many differing requirements and, inevitably, to some extent a compromise between them.

In the design of the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre at Guildford, the aim has been to provide a building that will attract theatre-goers from a wide area by giving them all the amenities and atmosphere so necessary for the enjoyment of good theatre. These, coupled with first-rate backstage facilities, will make the theatre a real centre of enjoyment in a setting and surroundings worthy of it.

An Island Site

Guildford is indeed fortunate in having such a really fine setting for its theatre. It is a little restricted, but these restrictions have certain advantages. For example, the site is part of an island formed by the River Wey and a backwater, which once fed the waterwheels of the old town mill, as well as the mill pool. The foyers, restaurant and club room can thus be placed to look out over the water, which vastly increases the apparent area of the site and, of course, precludes the possibility of encroachment by undesirable building.

There is no room for more than a few cars, perhaps fortunately. As there are good car parks nearby the provision of a large parking area immediately adjoining the theatre is not necessary.

The position in the locality is good, being very well placed on the fringe of one of the busiest parts of the town, very easily accessible from the bus and railway stations and by river as well as by road.

A Horseshoe Building

A number of shapes were tried for the building which, after much experiment, took a horseshoe form. This form turned out to be the most suitable for both the site and the building. It enabled the foyers and the club room over, and the restaurant to the south west, to wrap around the auditorium and take in the whole panorama of the waterscape, at the same time fitting neatly into an area whose best outlook terminates in a triangle.

It also has an incidental advantage which is being made full use of. By raising the almost circular auditorium roof above the wrap-around portion and extending it outwards slightly an ideal series of apertures

can be unobtrusively provided for the multitude of ducts, vents and other outlets which are needed in a building of such complexity.

A Huge Stage

No excuse is made for dealing first with the stage and backstage requirements.

Contrary to frequent practice, the stage has been given priority in planning this theatre. Audience amenities must be of the best, but the finest auditorium in the world has a limited value if the stage is anything less than the best that can be provided. Equipment may always be added, space seldom can. Hence the stage has been made as large as is possible, 90 feet from wing to wing and 33 feet in depth from what would be the front of the proscenium if there were one.

Full wing space allows for trucking to either side, and a fly tower provides for scenery to be flown. The fly tower has been kept to a height which is the minimum necessary, on grounds of economy and to avoid dominating the design.

A permanent cyclorama 58 feet wide enables an exceptionally wide area of stage to be used for productions which might exploit dramatically an atmosphere of spaciousness.

The sound and lighting will be operated from a control room at the back of the stalls, with full cover from onstage and front of house positions.

The use of the adjoining Old Mill for scenery construction, painting and storage has enabled this large uncluttered stage area to be achieved.

For the Players

Dressing rooms have been planned on the first and second floors, men on one floor and women on another, each having three double dressing rooms and a crowd room with all the usual (or perhaps unusual) facilities, including a bath and shower for each group.

There are often complaints of lack of a proper Green Room. Here we have a real Green Room, overlooking the river, with a roof terrace outside and with its own kitchenette.

It is also intended to provide two entirely self-contained bed-sitting room flatlets within the theatre building itself, to attract and make life easier for visiting guest artists.

Adaptability

Much research, confirmed by the findings of the recent conference of theatre technicians, has shown that there can be no such thing (short of phenomenal expenditure) as a fully adaptable theatre. Apart from other factors, fire regulations, which require a solid proscenium wall and a one-piece fire curtain, preclude all-round adaptability.

However, the limitation of a fixed proscenium arch has been avoided. Although there is in fact a proscenium wall the audience is not aware of it, for the auditorium funnels directly on to the stage area.

To reduce the unusually large stage opening when necessary, curtains or a temporary false proscenium can be used.

There is a small apron stage. Forward of this is an area which, by means of rostra, can be alternatively an extended apron stage, two rows of auditorium seating or a small orchestra pit. The fore-stage can be further increased by carrying a part of it right out into the auditorium where necessary.

The theatre can also be used for theatre-in-the-round, by building out a stage area into the auditorium, and seating part of the audience on what is normally the stage.

Front of House

The centre of the life of the theatre when the curtain is not up will be the first floor foyer with its arc of windows from floor to ceiling overlooking the mill pool. These windows will not be curtained so that the liveliness within will be seen from outside, and the lights will be reflected in the water. Here are the main entrances to the auditorium, the bar and to a promenade overlooking terrace, garden and Mill Pool.

It is intended that this foyer shall be luxuriously fitted, with red quilted wall covering, thick carpets and a central chandelier, while the other spaces will be treated with great simplicity.

Beneath this foyer and connected with it by a curving flight of steps is the entrance foyer, off which are the cloakrooms and the restaurant with its riverside terrace. The lower foyer can be used as an extension of the restaurant, and for exhibitions and displays.

The Auditorium

The circular shape of both stalls and circle makes for a close link between audience and actor.

It is intended that the decoration of the auditorium shall be simple, allowing the main focus to be the stage. The walls will be formed by a circular concrete drum cast with vertical ribs, to add strength and break up the surface acoustically, which will be treated with an absorbent material as necessary, the whole painted a deep midnight blue-black so that the walls themselves will be as far as possible in recession.

Colour and pattern will be provided by the seating and lighting and a suspended ceiling faced with wood.

A Social Centre

On the second floor above the main foyer and with its same splendid outlook will be a club room connected directly with the theatre and also accessible from outside. Here the activities of the existing theatre club will be able to continue in a greatly expanded form, for the clubroom will have its own kitchen for the service of refreshments and light meals and the room will be adaptable for dancing, lectures, films etc.

The building is in fact designed to be much more than just a theatre—to be a cultural and social centre, open all day, as the focal point in Guildford for all whose interests lie with the humanities.

JOHN BROWNRIGG

Opera in West Berlin

OSSIA TRILLING

SEPTEMBER 24th, 1961, is likely to be remembered as a notable day in West Berlin, certainly in musical and artistic if not in political circles. On that day the people of Berlin celebrated a double event, the opening of the eleventh West Berlin Arts Festival, the so-called "Berliner Festwochen," and the official inauguration of the new City Opera House, which has been re-christened the "Deutsche Oper, Berlin."

Situated on the site, in Charlottenburg, of the opera house that opened its doors in 1912 and whose contributions to European musical history is closely bound up with the names of Heinz Tietjen, Carl Ebert and Bruno Walter, the new building replaces that which went up in flames during an allied bombardment in 1943. As is well known, West Berlin operatic activities have, ever since 1945, been temporarily housed in the former "Theater des Westens" in the Kantstrasse, a small variety and operette theatre which was very much of a *pis aller*, lacking, as it did, adequate backstage room and having no workshops of any kind on the premises. For a time a certain amount of workshop and rehearsal space was salved in the gutted opera house in Charlottenburg, but now everything pertaining to operatic production is carried on under one capacious roof, while the Theater des Westens has reverted to its old role as a provider of light entertainment.

The Deutsche Oper was designed by Herr Bornemann, a German architect, who won the commission in open competition from among 60 designs. Its most striking feature is its wholly functional facade, on the Bismarckstrasse. This presents an uninterrupted rectangular wall, faced with small slabs of flint the size of a fist let into the concrete and measuring 220 feet by 42 feet. There are no windows in it and only the main entrance at ground-floor level breaks the line. Although the purpose of this design was to keep out the noise of the heavy east-west traffic using the main road and to protect the opera-goers using the foyer immediately behind the front wall from the heat of the mid-day sun, the cockneys of Berlin have already given it a variety of nicknames ranging from such relatively innocent ones as "the Dungeon" or "the Currant Cake" to others less printable. This arrangement, however, has enabled the two side elevations to be built entirely of plate glass, and, behind these, the insulated auditorium and the stage-housing can be espied.

The auditorium consists of a steeply raked stalls-tier seating 1,200. The remaining 700 seats are divided between two upper tiers. A limited number of side-boxes has been incorporated and the stage-opening presents the orthodox picture-frame aspect. Nevertheless, the seats are so arranged that there is perfect vision from everywhere and the proscenium can be adapted for open staging. The basic design was carried out in close consultation with the retiring director, Professor Carl Ebert, whose great experience as a producer of operas was drawn on in calculating the inner proportions and relations between stage and auditorium.

The stage itself, supplemented, like every other German opera house, by side and rear stages, is 59 feet square and contains six electrically-operated hoists, while the rear-stage has a sliding wagon fitted with a 55 foot wide revolve. The flies are 88 feet

above stage level which is 30 feet above the basement floor level. The proscenium opening has a maximum height of 26 feet and its width can be adjusted from 36 to 48 feet. Besides the usual cyclorama there are 240 transductor-controlled lighting circuits. The grey wooden facing of the auditorium as well as the specially designed flat plexiglass chandeliers have a deliberate acoustic function.

An unusual feature is the method of distributing the conditioned air, which is ducted into the auditorium through louvres in the single pedestals on which the seats are mounted. The air is then evacuated through the roof and it is claimed that no draughts will be felt by the public. The auditorium is divided off from the foyers by glass partitions which have the effect of insulating the former acoustically and permitting smoking throughout the remainder of the building. Access to the steeply-raked seats is provided by laminated directional gangways, which have a gradual slope but whose main function is to direct the public's gaze at the stage immediately they set foot inside the auditorium.

The opening opera—after an inaugural concert in the Konzertsaal in the forenoon —was Professor Ebert's swansong in Berlin before returning to teach at the University of South California in Los Angeles. This was a new production of *Don Giovanni,* with Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau in the name part. It was conducted by Ferenc Fricsay, who has been engaged as permanent musical director and adviser. Professor Ebert has handed over the reigns of the director's office to Mr. Gustav Rudolf Sellner, whose production of Giselher Klebe's *Alkmene* (based on Kleist's *Amphitryon)* was a world première and was conducted on the following evening by Heinrich Hollreiser. Gluck's *Orphée,* also staged by him, was conducted a fortnight later by Ernest Bour. On September 28th, Mr. Wieland Wagner directed a new production of *Aida* with Miss Gloria Davy, the American coloured soprano, in the name part and Karl Böhm as conductor.

Altogether the sum of DM 27m. (about £2,450,000) has been spent on the new theatre. The money was made available out of federal funds allocated by the West German government for the long-term reconstruction of Berlin.

Book Reviews

MICHAEL ANDERSON

Luther, by John Osborne (Faber and Faber, 102 pp., 10/6.)

Sam, the Highest Jumper of them All, by William Saroyan (Faber and Faber, 96 pp., 13/6.)

Abelard and Heloise, by Ronald Duncan (Faber and Faber, 80 pp., 12/6.)

Luther opens with an elaborate and lengthy ritual. The young Martin is being received into the order of the Eremites of St. Augustine; a procession of monks enters chanting; Martin is robed, swears the oath, and prostrates himself with arms extended in the form of a cross; then, slowly and solemnly, he is welcomed by each brother with the kiss of peace. The procession disappears.

I have to confess that when I saw this impressive scene played at the Phoenix I made the error of expecting it to have some significance which would be revealed as the play developed. Was Osborne giving us an initiation ceremony as dark and binding as anything performed by the most primitive tribes in Africa, with Martin Luther the first man to rebel against its vows ? I was ready for a battle royal between two views of Christianity—the Medieval, based on ritualised, social worship, and the Modern with its emphasis on a personal relationship between God and the individual. On the way I thought we might see reflected in this struggle the breakaway from the feudal concept of life—in fact the dawn of Modern Society.

Of course, I was mistaken. On two counts. First, of believing that the opening scene would tie up thematically with what was to follow; second, of expecting to find a perception of the broad sweep of history inside the play. But I would hope I have enough sense to admit that my being disappointed with *Luther* does not mean that it is one of the bad things that have happened to the English theatre.

For, happily for the critic, we live in an age where anything articulate on the stage is immediately suspect, and where form and structure are no longer the *sine qua non* of the competent dramatist. This immediately knocks away two of the principal supports on which the critic leans : he can no longer criticise the purely mechanical aspects of the play, nor can he display his superior knowledge of the subject under discussion. To read most critics after a visit to the theatre is like watching a family gently remonstrating with its youngest members while, shrieking and howling, he sets fire to their house.

Osborne was the first post-war dramatist to hurl his firebrands into the cosy atmosphere of the English theatre, and although from most of the critical standpoints one cares to adopt his plays contain all sorts of deplorable lapses, without *Look Back in Anger* we might still be floundering in the drawing-room tedium which preceded Wesker, Pinter, Arden and Bolt.

People are always at pains to point out that the theatre can never hope to be the leader of a social, political or artistic movement for the simple reason that every new idea is embraced at first by a tiny minority of intellectuals; and a tiny minority of intellectuals is not what forms queues outside the box-office. However, let us face up to the fact that hardly a single idea, except in the field of nuclear physics, has been produced since the war that was not foreshadowed in the earlier part of the century, nor does there seem to be anything very promising waiting in the wings. Most of our critical jargon dates back to the days when the era of Victorian self-righteousness was breaking up, and new ideas—political, social, religious— were flooding the market and had to be analysed, sifted and assessed. Nowadays we search in vain for such originality, and the importance of Osborne has been that he has abandoned the quest. His plays have ignored the critical signposts which point to Art and Creation, and have turned the searchlight on men and women who voice aloud feelings which have been suppressed inside a large proportion of the postwar generation. Thus Osborne has given the theatre the same basic homeopathic function prescribed by Aristotle (in another generation when originality was on the wane)—that of purging the emotions; and his distinction has been that his voice is one of the loudest.

In *Luther* we do not see an analysis of society, modern or ancient, nor do we have

a contribution to the understanding of a human predicament. What Osborne has given us, as he has in all his successful plays, is a man who feels intensely, and manages to project feeling upon a society that is in danger of losing all humanity in a wave of euphoric Welfare anaesthesia. Nothing is painless for Luther : he suffers permanently from constipation; at Confession one monk says " I confess I have failed to rise from my bed speedily enough "; another admits to asking for a bath when it was not necessary for his health; Luther says " My bones fail. My bones fail, my bones are shattered and fall away, my bones and all that's left of me is a scraped marrow and a dying jelly." Before his first Mass he asks passionately " Oh, Mary, dear Mary, all I see of Christ is a flame and raging on a rainbow. Pray to your Son, and ask Him to still His anger, for I can't raise my eyes to look at Him. Am I the only one to see all this, and suffer ? "

For the critic, conducting a literary dissection of the work, the play lacks organisation and the central issues of difference between Luther and the Catholic Church are not brought out clearly enough. But to Osborne, as to a growing number of intelligent people in this country today, these things are not as important as the intensity of sheer, human emotion which vibrates through the whole play. There is the virulent dialogue of Luther himself, there is Tetzel, the Dominican seller of indugences, played with a brilliant mixture of contempt and condescension by Peter Bull : " Are you wondering who I am, or what I am ? Is there anyone here among you, any small child, any cripple, or any sick idiot who hasn't heard of me, and doesn't know why I am here ? No ? No ? Well, speak up then if there is ! What, no one ? Do you all know me then ? Do you all know who I am ?" There is Pope Leo X, who issues his Bull of Condemnation against Luther, seemingly distracted by the hounds and hawks in his Northern Italian hunting-lodge : " There's a wild pig in our vineyard, and it must be hunted down and shot ".

Future historians, if there are any, will probably point to the fact that a playwright of the stature of Osborne cannot combine sincerity with coherence, as the mark of a disintegrating society; but even a society in smithereens cannot excuse the second-rate banality masquerading as art in *Sam, the Highest Jumper of them All.* The play was written during rehearsal with the co-operation of the actors, who must have found it difficult to contribute anything to the feeble idea around which William Saroyan chose to base his work. Sam, a bank clerk, is wrongly accused of stealing a million pounds, and (naturally enough) decides to become the world's champion high-jumper. He succeeds, but only in his imagination; with a certain amount of panache he leaves the cast as puzzled as the audience, and the play ends. In a pontifical introduction addressed to the fifteen critics who happened to be in London to condemn the play when it first appeared, William Saroyan says : " I say *Sam* is a good play. I am sorry you say it isn't. One of us is obviously mistaken. Knowing the paltry little I know, I cannot believe it is me ". I must humbly join the company, including Bernard Levin, W. A. Darlington, Philip Hope Wallace, T. C. Worsley and J. W. Lambert, that knows less than William Saroyan.

It is a relief to turn from the arrogant ineptitude of *Sam* to the unassuming artistry of Ronald Duncan's *Abelard and Heloise* (not that anyone but a critic would be likely to have both books in his house). Based on an extant set of letters written

by the two lovers to each other long after Abelard's castration, the play is called "a Correspondence for the Stage" and is really a series of soliloquies which develop logically and dramatically out of one another. The intelligence and perception which dominate the poet's exploration of this theme command the reader, if they would not excite the theatre-goer; in an age when everyone is trying to be a major prophet, it is pleasant to meet a minor poet who knows what he is about.

MICHAEL ANDERSON

Also received: *King Henry IV, Part I,* Edited by J. H. Walter, with Notes and Introduction. (Heinemann, 250 pp. 5/6.)

A new edition for schools, designed "to encourage pupils to study the play as a play, to see it not so much as a novel or a historical narrative, but as a pattern of speech and movement creating an artistic whole." Fair enough, but schoolmasters should be warned not to accept the Editor's word as gospel, particularly in matters related to the Elizabethan stage.

M.J.A.

The Rehearsal, by Jean Anouilh, translated by Pamela Hansford Johnson and Kitty Black. Methuen. 94 pp. 10/6.

Although this Pièce Brillante was first produced in Paris in 1950, it has only just become available in English translation, and is at present running in London. M. Anouilh takes once again as his setting a sophisticated and convention-bound high society, in which boredom and loneliness are the constant burden of the leaders of the 'gay life'. An aristocracy unable to grow up and no longer amused by amusing itself has been M. Anouilh's subject before, and while his construction and technical skill have always drawn the admiration of our intellects, he has not always succeeded in touching our hearts or making us care one way or the other what happens to his bored neurotics. *The Rehearsal* is therefore distinguished from many of his other comedies of manners by the fact that one is directly moved, genuinely concerned for his characters, and involved from beginning to end.

The plot is simple enough: the Count, familiarly known as 'Tiger', falls in love with a servant girl, Lucile, while rehearsing a play by Marivaux with his house-party at Ferbroques. Tiger describes his own feelings and the situation as he describes the Marivaux character, Silvia (played by Lucile), to his guest-actors: "She is a clear and limpid being. In this luxurious universe, sneering under its silks, its plumes, she stands alone, bright and naked under her cotton frock; erect and silent, she watches them all as they whirl and plot around her. Suddenly, everything which has made for the Prince's strength and pleasure falls to pieces in his hand... worthless. Silvia is a small, inaccessible being who stands watching him, a thousand leagues away, and troubles his heart. So something else besides pleasure exists in this world, something that has always existed... and he did not know it?"

This is the old story—the Prince and the serving girl—but, needless to say, M. Anouilh's treatment and presentation make of it something quite different. The house-party consists of people who need a constant drug to prevent themselves from thinking or seeing clearly, who perpetually put a wall between themselves and reality. The wall they build consists of sleeping pills, detective novels, balls, and a play by Marivaux. But the Marivaux turns out to be the weak section in their wall, the point where the defences give and reality begins to seep through; for the play has been carefully cast, and the actors find themselves

saying in their lines what it is really in their hearts to say. The play points to the truth with unnerving steadiness, the conventions are nearly broken, the truth is nearly out. In their moment of crisis the forces of convention join together. Tiger's wife and mistress ally against the intruder, as cats purr at each other with claws only just concealed. Hero, Tiger's friend since schooldays and now a cynical drunkard, is equally appalled at the possibility of truth, reality or happiness coming thus unsought into his suitably anaesthetized world of pretence. The conflict flares between those who wish to live and those who wish only to play at life, who substitute the charade, the light comedy, the Marivaux play for the real thing. Against the sophisticated time-killers who have to amuse themselves for twelve or fifteen hours a day, is set Lucile, the working girl. Does she stand for 'the real thing', or does she too have her own particular charade in her romantic dream of noble love? Is it, perhaps, Hero who at last leaves his mock-heroic detachment and finds his own salvation?

This has been called a "sour-centred" comedy, yet the play is, in general, in a major rather than a minor key. It is gay, sparkling and vivacious, with, here and there, its menacing undertone of the macabre. It reads as well as it acts, and I would thoroughly recommend it to anyone who has not been fortunate enough to see the very excellent London production. One forgets that it is a translation, which is high praise to the translators, and it is only a pity that *rehearsal* does not have the same double meaning in English as *répétition* has in French.

The craftsmanship of the play is masterly, particularly the use and integration of the Marivaux. The dialogue is what we have come to expect from M. Anouilh. "Since the invention of language", says Tiger in the play, "there has always been some double meaning behind the spoken word. In fact, words were invented expressly for that reason". Whatever may be the etymological accuracy of that statement, here we have certainly a past master in the art. Whether or not the author intends his audience to see in itself a collection of bored time-killers, escapists from reality and addicts of the entertainment drug, with *The Rehearsal* as yet another of their diversions, another stone in the wall against reality, he is too polite to make clear.

Mary Gowan Morgan.

Also received:

The Plays of Courteline. (Heinemann, 8/6)
Night Must Fall, by Emlyn Williams. (Heinman, 6/-)

Selected Writings of Oscar Wilde, with an introduction by Richard Ellman. (O.U.P., 7/6.)

Curtmantle, by Christopher Fry (O.U..P., 10/6)

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